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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 001857

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR P, WHA/CAN AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IR](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA: IRANIAN NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR IN OTTAWA

REF: STATE 114104

Classified By: POL M/C Brian Flora, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

1. (C) Charge delivered reftel demarche, regarding the appointment of Ahmad Azizi as Iran's ambassador to Canada, to Peter Boehm, Assistant Deputy Minister (North America) at Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC), on June 20. Boehm, referring to the conversation last week between Under Secretary Nicholas Burns and Assistant Deputy Minister Jim Wright, welcomed the opportunity for us to present more information about our opposition to Azizi's appointment as Ambassador to Canada.

2. (C) Boehm emphasized that no decision had been made on whether to accredit Azizi, and reiterated that the GoC had been deliberating this issue for some time. In response to Charge's question on the timeline for a decision, Boehm (protect) said that Tehran had been pushing Ottawa to make a decision before the Iranian elections last week. Boehm couldn't provide a definitive timeline, but he gave his assurance that FAC would share with us whatever decision was made, before it was announced publicly.

3. (C) Continuing, Boehm said that FAC was in the process of checking with other missions on Azizi's history, given reports that Azizi might be considered a relative moderate (or one of the "good guys," as Boehm put it). In addition, he noted that Azizi had served previously as Iran's Ambassador to Germany. Boehm also stressed that the GoC had to consider its own bilateral relationship with Iran when making this decision, and the possible adverse impact a rejection of Azizi might have, particularly in terms of Ottawa's influence with Tehran on ongoing nuclear and human rights issues in Iran.

4. (C) In a parallel meeting, POL M/C registered U.S. concerns at a senior level in the Privy Council Office (PCO). He met with Phil Ventura, the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet for U.S.-Canada relations to make sure the PCO was aware of how strongly we felt about the Azizi nomination and the irritation his acceptance by Ottawa would cause among senior U.S. officials. Ventura said he was preoccupied with SPP matters and was only vaguely aware of the discussion surrounding Azizi. He agreed that it should be brought forward for senior PCO review, and promised to raise the issue with the Prime Minister's Senior Foreign Policy Advisor, Jonathan Fried.

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